

About the Shoreline Master Program Update

Under the Shoreline Management Act, each city and county adopts a shoreline master program that is based on state guidelines but tailored to the specific needs of the community. More than 200 cities and all 39 counties have shoreline master programs. Local shoreline master programs combine both plans and regulations. The plans are a comprehensive vision of how shoreline areas will be used and developed over time. Regulations are the standards that shoreline projects and uses must meet.

The Shoreline Act applies to:

- all marine waters;
- streams with a mean annual flow greater than 20 cubic feet per second;
- water areas (e.g. lakes) of the state larger than 20 acres;
- Upland areas called “shorelands” 200 feet landward from the edge of these waters;

and the following areas when they are associated with one of the above:

- biological wetlands and river deltas; and
- some or all of the 100-year floodplain including all wetlands within the entire floodplain.

The Shoreline Act also states that “the interests of all the people shall be paramount in the management of shorelines of state-wide significance.” These shorelines are defined in the Act as:

- Pacific Coast, Hood Canal and certain Puget Sound shorelines;
- all waters of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca;
- lakes or reservoirs with more than 1,000 surface acres; and
- larger rivers (1,000 cubic feet per second or greater for rivers in Western Washington, 200 cubic feet per second and greater east of the Cascade crest); and
- wetlands associated with all the above.

Elements of King County’s Shoreline Master Program

The Shoreline Master Program is made up of the following elements:

• Chapter 5 of the King County Comprehensive Plan

This chapter describes King County’s shoreline goals and policies. It addresses the shoreline jurisdiction, overall shoreline policy goals, shoreline element policies, the Shoreline Master Program’s relationship to other laws,

shoreline environment designations, environmental protection, shoreline use and modification, and administrative policies. This Comprehensive Plan chapter is supplemented with the following appendices and map folio:

- **Shoreline Restoration Plan:** The Shoreline Restoration Plan summarizes the methods and results of King County’s shoreline analysis with respect to restoration planning, the elements and applicability of the restoration plan, and the ways in which shoreline restoration is expected to occur over time.
- **Shoreline Public Access Plan:** The Shoreline Public Access Plan includes an inventory of existing formal and informal shoreline public access opportunities in the unincorporated area, and identifies gaps in public access opportunities. This Public Access Plan describes King County’s draft priorities for providing new public access to major shorelines in the unincorporated area.
- **Cumulative Impacts Analysis:** The Cumulative Impacts Analysis provides a mechanism for examining the success of County policies and regulations in meeting the no-net-loss goal contained in the state guidelines for the Shoreline Master Program update.
- **Technical Appendix:** The Technical Appendix includes the data and analytic methods used to develop King County’s shoreline inventory and shoreline characterization (including evaluation of existing physical and ecological processes and functions, public access and recreation, land use and economic development, public facilities and utilities, and archaeological and historic resources). In addition, the Technical Appendix includes methodologies for cumulative impact analysis associated with shoreline management and comprehensive shoreline restoration planning.
- **Map Folio**
- **King County’s Shoreline Regulations:** The shoreline regulations implement the goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. These include land use and development regulations and enforcement regulations. These regulations are currently codified in King County Code Title 25; the county proposes to repeal Title 25 and integrate shoreline regulations into other elements of the code.

King County’s current Shoreline Master Program was adopted in 1977 and has not been substantially changed since then. The following table summarizes the major changes included in King County’s proposed update to its Shoreline Master Program.

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OVERVIEW

Overview of Major Changes in the Proposed Draft

Major Changes		
	Current Shoreline Program	Proposed Changes in Draft Shoreline Program
Shorelines Covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake miles: 162 • River bank miles: 1,196 • Marine shoreline miles: 51 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake miles: 234 • River bank miles: 1,696 • Marine shoreline miles: 51
Shoreline Designations	<p>Four Shoreline Environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban • Rural • Conservancy • Natural 	<p>Eight Shoreline Environments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Intensity Shoreline: Applied to areas that provide high-intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses. • Residential Shoreline: Applied to accommodate residential uses at urban densities, while allowing for non-residential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline. • Rural Shoreline: Applied to accommodate rural residential shoreline development, while allowing for rural non-residential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline. • Conservancy Shoreline: Applied to protect and conserve the shoreline for ecological, public safety and recreation purposes. Includes areas with important ecological processes and functions, valuable historic and cultural features, flood and geological hazards, and recreational opportunities. • Resource Shoreline: Applied to conserve the shoreline for agricultural and mineral resource use. • Forestry Shoreline: Applied in areas to allow for forestry and protect municipal water supplies. • Natural Shoreline: Applied to shorelines that are relatively intact or have minimally degraded shoreline functions that are intolerant of human use. • Aquatic Shoreline: Applied to the areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark.
Shoreline Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Growth Area: 115 ft. • Rural Area: 165 ft. <p>(From Critical Areas Ordinance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside Urban Growth Area – 115 ft. • Outside Urban Growth Area – 165 ft. • No additional setbacks in the shoreline jurisdiction.

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Overview of Major Changes in the Proposed Draft *continued*

Major Changes		
	Current Shoreline Program	Proposed Changes in Draft Shoreline Program
Forest Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a shoreline conditional use permit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On lands not zoned F On shorelines of statewide significance or when impact to fish or wildlife habitat is possible 100 foot buffer on all forest practices requiring a conditional use permit No harvest within critical area buffers on lands not zoned F Detailed standards for the conduct of the forest practices Not allowed in the urban or natural shoreline environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Rural, Conservancy, Forestry and Resource environments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with state forest practice rules Shoreline conditional use permit not required Letter of shoreline exemption not required In the Natural Shoreline environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited to forest practices to enhance forest health
Docks, piers and floats	<p>Lakes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal floating docks and piers only allowed when density is greater than 3 du/acre and there is no significant shoreline vegetation. (CAO) <p>Rivers and Marine Shorelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage joint use docks and piers, limit of 1 per lot for single family, and 1 per development site for multi-family 	<p>Lakes, Rivers, and Marine Shorelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Intensity, Shoreline Residential, Conservancy, and Rural Shoreline Environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-family residential = 1 per development site Single Family Residential = max 1 per lot; must demonstrate other options not available first Commercial & industrial uses = max 1 per development site Conservancy Shoreline Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private docks must be located at least 250 feet from another dock or pier Conservancy, Resource, Forestry, and Natural Shoreline Environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires a shoreline conditional use permit Natural Shoreline Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Docks not allowed

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OVERVIEW

Overview of Major Changes in the Proposed Draft *continued*

Major Changes		
	Current Shoreline Program	Proposed Changes in Draft Shoreline Program
Shoreline Stabilization, including bulkheads	<p>Replacement shoreline protection must be on same alignment of the protection it is replacing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bulkheads may be allowed under some circumstances if they connect with existing bulkheads on adjoining property • Bulkheads are exempt from shoreline substantial permit requirements only if specific criteria are satisfied, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erosion from waves or currents is imminently threatening a legally established residence or one or more substantial accessory structures; - The proposed bulkhead is more consistent with the King County shoreline master program in protecting the site and adjoining shorelines than feasible, non-structural alternatives and those non-structural alternatives are not feasible or will not adequately protect a legally established residence or substantial accessory structure; - The proposed bulkhead is located landward of the ordinary high water mark or it connects adjacent, legally established bulkheads; and - The maximum height of the proposed bulkhead is no more than one foot above the elevation of extreme high water on tidal waters or four feet in height on lakes • Shoreline protection is not an outright permitted use. • Applicant must demonstrate that protection is necessary to preserve an existing legally established structure or public improvements or to protect agricultural land. • Shoreline protection is not permitted in the natural environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally allowed when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erosion from waves or currents is imminently threatening a legally established residence, an existing or new water-dependent development, or for restoration or a hazardous waste remediation site - The proposed structure is more consistent with the King County shoreline master program in protecting the site and adjoining shorelines than feasible, non-structural alternatives and those non-structural alternatives are not feasible or will not adequately protect a legally established residence, an existing or new water-dependent development, or for restoration or a hazardous waste remediation site; - The proposed structure is located landward of the ordinary high water mark or it connects to adjacent, legally established bulkheads; and - The maximum height of the proposed bulkhead is no more than one foot above the elevation of extreme high water on tidal waters or four feet in height on lakes; - Comply with Washington State Integrated Stream Protection Guidelines; • Conservancy, Forestry and Natural Shorelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires a shoreline conditional use permit • Avoid feeder bluffs, salmonid and forage fish habitat, and eelgrass beds

OVERVIEW

Overview of Major Changes in the Proposed Draft *continued*

Major Changes		
	Current Shoreline Program	Proposed Changes in Draft Shoreline Program
Aquaculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical areas and clearing and grading regulations apply • No SMP specific requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquaculture a permitted use in all shoreline environments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the shoreline residential and rural environments, net pens may not be located closer than 1,500 feet of the OHWM - In the natural environment, structures, facilities, or mechanized harvesting not allowed • Commercial salmon net-pens not permitted • New net-pens and rafts may not be located closer than one mile to another net-pen or raft
Shoreline Exemptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for development proposals within the shoreline that do not require a shoreline substantial development permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of shoreline exemption required for development activity below the ordinary high water mark within the shoreline, except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance of agricultural drainage located within the shoreline if the drainage is not a shoreline of the state, e.g. flow less than 20 cfs.